



President's message

by Mike Homer Jr.

Greetings and happy spring! I hope all of you are doing well and that you have been able to have some exciting fishing ventures since our meeting in College Station. Recently, I had the pleasure of attending the 2018 Southern Division annual meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. At the meeting, many members participated in a service project to replant and restore sand dunes on one of the local beaches that had been devastated by flooding from Hurricane Harvey and other inclement weather that had just occurred not too long before we had arrived. Throughout the meeting, many members were encouraging and enthusiastic about TCAFS hosting the annual meeting in 2019, and I am hopeful that we are going to have an excellent turnout. Furthermore, our previous chapter president, Craig Bonds, was installed as the new SDAFS President.

Since returning from Puerto Rico, the TCAFS EXCOM has been garnering support for the potential Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA; House Resolution 4647) by signing letters of support to be sent to legislators. For those of you unfamiliar with RAWA, the legislation would designate \$1.3 billion annually in existing royalties from energy and mineral production on federal lands and waters for wildlife restoration. An estimated \$63 million per year of this funding would be used to complete projects in the Texas Conservation Action Plan. Yet, there is still much work to be done to reach our legislators in Texas. Each of us can work towards advocating for this potentially revolutionary legislation by contacting our local state representatives and signing a letter of support through the Texas Wildlife Alliance (<http://txwildlifealliance.org/about-us/join-the-alliance.html>) and Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife (<http://ournatureusa.com/>). Drafting your own letter of support to send to your local representative and educating others about the Act and encouraging them to take similar steps would be beneficial for this effort.

During the last EXCOM meeting, we discussed ways we could improve membership, particularly through enhancing diversity and inclusion within our chapter. I wanted to use this message to bring this topic to the attention of our membership. In the "big picture," the Society has been working to diversify its membership to prepare future leaders for the fisheries profession. Our world is becoming more diverse, and in order to successfully manage natural resources and effectively communicate science, the Society has begun addressing the need to increase diversity and inclusion in the fisheries field. In August 2017, Penaluna et al. (2017) published an article in Fisheries discussing nine action areas where the Society can make improvements (see <https://fisheries.org/2017/08/nine-proposed-action-areas-to-enhance-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-american-fisheries-society/>) I would like to encourage all of you to read the article and reflect on how these areas could be improved in our own chapter. Every five years, the Society appoints a special committee to work on the strategic plan that focuses on specific objectives and plans to achieve them. The 2015-2019 plan recognized that "the Society will increase the disciplinary, gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity and engagement of its members as a vital means to maintain relevancy and respond to the challenges facing fisheries science and management" (<https://fisheries.org/about/governance/strategic-plan-2015-2019/>).

Currently, our chapter does not have an official strategy to address this issue, but the EXCOM and other members have voiced the opinion that improving diversity and inclusion should be a priority. To identify and implement strategies for change may seem like a daunting task. However, the biggest step that we can take is recognizing a need for change and then working towards developing strategies to improve our chapter to better serve our future professionals as they work to manage fisheries resources. Developing a more diverse and inclusive chapter will help us broaden our ability to engage and recruit potential members, be more innovative, enhance our abilities to conduct and communicate fisheries research, better fulfill our mission by gaining an understanding of the social needs for fisheries conservation, as well as make our organization and the professions we represent more relevant to society.

2019 Annual Meeting of the Southern Division - American Fisheries Society

by Dan Daugherty, TCAFS president-elect, 2019 SDAFS meeting chair



January 24th – 27th, 2019 - Galveston Island, Texas

Make no mistake – this is OUR meeting!

Howdy, y'all! I've had a few people ask me when the 2019 Texas Chapter AFS annual meeting is going to be, which suggested that it might not be abundantly clear that our TCAFS annual meeting will be integrated into the 2019 SDAFS annual meeting that we are hosting. We fully intend to continue our normal traditions, including our chapter presentation awards, auction and raffle, and business meetings – we'll just have a lot more guests.

Meeting planning committees are fully engaged, and much has been accomplished to date. Our meeting webpage is up and running, calls for workshops and symposia are active, the hotel room block is available, and meeting details are being updated regularly. So, mark your calendars and keep up-to-date on meeting details at:

<https://units.fisheries.org/tx/tc-meetings/2019-meeting-home-page/>

We hope to see you there!



Annual meeting of the
Southern Division
of the
American Fisheries Society

Galveston, Texas

January 24th – 27th 2019



Texas Chapter AFS EXCOM Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2018

Conference Call

by Niki Ragan-Harbison, Secretary Treasurer

Call to Order: by TCAFS President Michael Homer at 1:07 pm.

Determination of a quorum: Yes, by Niki Ragan-Harbison

President's Report: (Michael Homer)

- Raised about \$10,600 from meeting in January.
- Chapter was charged tax, but is working with hotel management to be reimbursed.
- Craig Bonds is the newly elected SDAFS President
- There were about 270 SDAFS attendees and about 70 participated in service day projects.

President-Elect's Report – (Dan Daugherty, not present):

- Working on his turkey calling, no update.

Past-President's Report – (Randy Rushin):

- Wants to help get student subunits involved in the Chapter.
- Wants to help further the Chapter's diversity efforts

Secretary-Treasurer's Report – (Niki Ragan-Harbison):

- Account balance: \$27,196.62
- Holding off on moving excess to the endowment fund until after speaking with the SDAFS planning committee to determine a budget for next year's meeting. (Will move excess of \$20k into Endowment account to leave a buffer for SDAFS meeting planning.)
- Working on TCAFS tax preparation and will send that out to our CPA soon.
- Also have questions for SDAFS planning committee on what expenses to mark as TCAFS vs. SDAFS and the best way to differentiate the two.
- (Mike Homer) – Hilton charged TCAFS taxes on the final banquet bill, but will be issuing a reimbursement check for those fees. (Check has since been received and deposited into our checking account.)

SDAFS 2019 Update –

- Have Moody Gardens site visit first week of April to work on meeting plans. Dan will organize a meeting or conference call afterwards to update the rest of the planning committee.

Committee Reports

Awards/ History/ Social Media – Michele Nations (present)

- Starting to prep for SDAFS, including recruiting judges.
- Working on sorting out details of presentation judging (presentations to be judged for TCAFS vs. SDAFS awards and who judges them, what overlap occurs, etc.).
- Working on updating the Chapter History.
- Louisa from TAMUCC helped set up TCAFS Instagram account and will help promote meeting.
- Send Michele any info that needs to be sent out to the TCAFS listserv.

Continuing Education – Lynn Wright (present)

- Dan Daugherty put together a Google Docs form to solicit members for desired topics.
- Talked to the SDAFS continuing ed. person and got their database of presenters for the last 5 years.

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- Dan wants a full day workshop of all things gar related and a how-to session on effective peer reviews.
 - Will send out solicitations in April.

Editorial – Dan Daugherty (not present) and Allison Pease (not present)

- No update.

Endowments – Dave Terre (present)

- Endowment Account Balance: \$325,615
- There were only 5 applicants for the SARA internship and of those 5, only 2 were TCAFS members. We need to brainstorm how to increase applicant pool, but may have just been unfortunate timing in Joe Beach's departure from TPWD recruiting.
- More endowment fund history will be provided in the upcoming newsletter.
- In future we should be able to provide the current level of scholarships with endowment fund earnings alone. (Secretary's note: This is awesome!)

Internet – Sarah Haas (not present) and John Taylor (not present)

- All podcasts from 2018 meeting are online now.

Issues – Mark Webb (not present) and Niki Ragan-Harison (present)

- Need to talk to Ken Kurzawski about how to move forward with an official statement.
- Homer will update in new business.

Membership – Debbie Wade (not present)

- No update

Newsletter – Kevin Storey (present)

- Deadline of May 11th for newsletter input.
- Anyone not getting the newsletter can download the last version from the website and send Kevin an email to get added.
- Anyone and everyone can send in articles with pictures to Kevin to put in the newsletter.

Nominating – Dan Bennett (present)

- Currently have one candidate for Secretary/Treasurer – John Clayton.
- Natalie Goldstrom rumored to have interest in running for S/T as well.
- Has a few ideas of possible recruits, but trying to focus on non-TPWD for S/T since has primarily been a TPWD held position for past several years.

Pond Management – Greg Binion (not present)

- Not present

Publicity/Exhibits – Stephen Curtis (not present) and Stephanie George (present)

- All went well, artwork and handmade items were a crowd favorite.
- Natalie went through all raffle items to see what types of items were most popular so team can focus on those types of donations in the future.
- Working with Tom Lang to get forms ready to start soliciting for 2019 meeting soon.

Scholarships – Jennifer Butler (present)

- No update

Student Outreach – Josh Perkin (present)

- After business meeting, polled programs to see who had students that would be interested in being involved – got 16 universities. Hasn't reached outside of universities yet.
- Looking to get students to share their experiences in the newsletter (like internship synopses) to get the word out about opportunities.

Student Subunit Chapter Reports;

- **Tarleton State University** – None present
 - No update
- **Texas A&M University** – Mark Wilder
 - Recent Activities:
 - 2 guest speakers: Niki Ragan & Zach Pritchard (?)
 - Will contact Randy to coordinate with him when traveling.
 - 16 attendees on seining trip with Aquarium Society & research groups. Performed different types of sampling to expose participants to different methods.
 - Another trip coming up.
 - Donation items coming in for the subunit and for the next TCAFS meeting.
 - Working on a new logo
 - \$406 earned this past TCAFS meeting, have a balance of \$2,138.
- **Texas A&M University Corpus Christi** – Louisa Torrance for Tyler Steube
 - Have had multiple outreach events & service days.
 - Environmental event with elementary students – 240 students.
 - Have been involved with a student volunteer organization – TAMUCC focuses on the fishing aspect.
 - Are on the Texas Master Naturalist listserv – have lots of outreach events that they can participate in – taught kids about bag/size limits and fishing licenses.
 - Have a goal of putting together an outreach binder of long-standing events to participate in & start hosting their own.
- **Texas Tech University** - None present
 - No update

Old Business:

- Online store – was open for about a month, were given an extra week to improve sales.
- Michele Nations purchased remaining (required) quota and donated them back to the Chapter to help raise funds.
- Update to Chapter Bylaws and Procedures, David Buzan
 - Sent to EXCOM, and Niki will send to SDAFS and AFS for review/acceptance once all updates are complete.
- Recovering America's Wildlife Act
 - Chapter has signed a letter of support through the Society website and through Texas Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife.
 - Waiting to hear back from Mark Webb on whether we want to draft an official letter of support.
 - Need to reach out to Ken Kurzawski on how to formally submit a letter of support to our legislators.
 - Any suggestions on how to further support this legislation are welcome.
- Michele is checking on best student presenter winner and their need/want for travel reimbursement as their award.

New Business:

- We have been charged to increase diversity within the Chapter from the Society level down.
- Need to branch out and try to attract new members and more diverse members – not just in regard to ethnicity or sex, but also career-track/interests.

Adjourn: Michael Homer made the motion to adjourn the meeting; Michele Nations seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:41 pm.

TAMUCC sub-unit in action

The Texas A&M Corpus Christi sub-unit has been actively engaged in public outreach this spring.

- ❖ Tyler Steube and Louisa Torrance attended the Spring Science Extravaganza at Mireles Elementary Schools which hosted a variety of local natural science organizations to educate 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders. They talked to over 270 students about sustainable fishing, marine debris and proper beach stewardship, and bag limits and slot sizes of popular saltwater gamefish.



- They hosted a beach cleanup



- Members volunteered at a Kid-Fish Event at a “Touch a Truck” event at Water’s Edge Park hosted by the Junior League of Corpus Christi. TPWD and SEA (Saltwater Fisheries Enhancement Association), a Corpus Christi nonprofit) hosted interactive critter touch tanks and a freshwater tank with real fish.



Flotsam & Jetsam – fish stories from around the world

❖ Stonefish with switchblades

Scientists recently discovered a remarkable specialization in stonefishes during a phylogenetic study of scorpionfishes and their relatives (Smith et al 2018). This group of stonefishes are rare and dangerous fish that live in the coastal waters of the Indo-Pacific. They were found to have a modification of an anterior spine (or spines) on the ventral surface of the lachrymal which enables them to rotate these structures, lachrymal sabers, and lock them in place perpendicular to the head-tail axis. Lachrymal bones are normally immobile. These “switchblades” are found on their cheeks just below the eyes. The saber is heavily spined which indicates it’s used as a weapon. To add insult to injury, some species deliver a powerful venom when the spines make contact. Both male and female fish possess this adaptation and these tiny swords range in length from about half the width of their eye to about 2.5 times the width.

One example of these weapon-bearing fish is the South Australian cobbler or soldierfish, *Gymnapistes marmoratus*, a brown colored fish that lives in estuaries in southern Australia on the eastern (New South Wales) and western (Western Australia – near Perth) coasts.



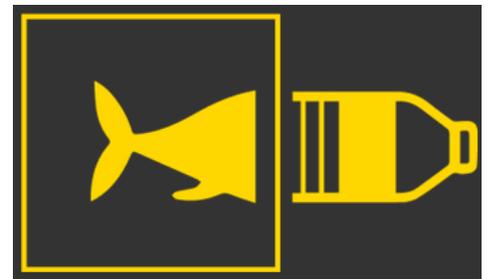
This soldierfish (*Gymnapistes marmoratus*) has one saber in and the other saber out on either side of its head.

Credit: Copyright American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists

<http://www.asihcopeiaonline.org/doi/abs/10.1643/CG-17-669>

❖ Global plastic trash crisis

Nat Geo has created a multiyear effort called “Planet or Plastic?” to raise awareness about the global plastic trash crisis. This topic was highlighted in the June 2018 issue of the magazine, but they have also created a website as a vehicle to distribute information to raise international attention to this issue. Want to take action? You can sign up to receive email about how to keep plastic out of the oceans. It could start with you!



<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/planetorplastic/>



Join the Texas Chapter

If you are interested in joining or renewing your membership to the Texas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, you can get membership materials at our web site, <http://sd.fisheries.org/tcafs/> or by contacting Deborah Wade, Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, 5550 FM 2495, Athens, TX 75752, (903) 670-2234, Deborah.Wade@tpwd.state.tx.us

If your e-mail address has changed, please contact us with an update so you can continue to receive the chapter newsletter.

Members are encouraged to make submissions to the Newsletter Editor by mail or e-mail to one of the addresses listed below.

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